

Consumer and Family Financial Services

The programs in the Department of Consumer Sciences provide students with unique opportunities for careers in industries that provide goods and services, ranging from financial planners to merchandisers in retail or wholesale settings, to hotel and restaurant managers. The department's programs encompass product and service knowledge; the study of people who produce and distribute products and services, as well as the study of the people who use them; and the processes involved from conception to consumption. Programs in the department focus on the enhancement of consumer, individual, and family well-being.

Students select one of two specializations in the Consumer and Family Financial Services major:

Consumer Services

The focal point of the consumer services specialization is the interaction between consumers and the marketplace. Courses emphasize understanding of consumer issues and concerns, consumer behavior and decision making, marketplace complexities, resolution of consumer problems, and public policy affecting consumer welfare. Emphasis is placed on developing communication and analytical skills related to consumer/market concepts.

Family Financial Services

The family financial services specialization focuses on helping families and individuals reach financial goals through effective management of financial resources. Specific topics of study include general financial planning; use of insurance, credit, savings, and investment instruments to reach financial goals; and retirement and estate planning. This program is registered with the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) Board of Standards, Inc., and courses satisfy the CFP board's education requirement, allowing students to sit for the CFP® Exam.

Pursuing Consumer and Family Financial Services at Ohio State

All freshman applicants to Ohio State are considered within a competitive admission process for the Columbus campus. The primary criteria for admission are completion of the applicant's high school college preparatory program, performance in that program as indicated by class rank and/or grade-point average, and performance on either the ACT or SAT.

Students should have a strong background in the social sciences, math and computer sciences, and written and verbal communication. They should be interested in improving the quality of life for families and consumers.

Upon admission to the university, students enroll directly into the Consumer and Family Financial Services pre-major. Acceptance into the major is contingent upon approval of an application submitted when the following criteria are met:

- Completion of 15 credit hours of coursework
- Completion of Economics 200 and Statistics 133, 135, or 145 or Agricultural Economics 205 with a grade of C- or better
- Achievement of a minimum 2.0 cumulative point-hour ratio
- Achievement of B- or better in Consumer and Family Financial Services 260 (for students specializing in family financial services only)

The first two years of the program is devoted primarily to meeting the General Education Curriculum requirements and concentrating on the basic sciences and arts. Several introductory major courses are open to students during the freshman and sophomore years. Courses in consumer sciences with professional emphasis and courses in areas related to a specialization within Consumer and Family Financial Services are scheduled during the junior and senior years.

Consumer and Family Financial Services Requirements

A minimum of 181 quarter hours are required to complete the Consumer and Family Financial Services program. Required major courses include Family Financial Management, Consumer Problems, accounting, communications, statistics, and writing. In addition, students take a core of consumer science courses on the consumer perspective, consumer service and satisfaction, the multicultural consumer, consumer decision making, and professional development.

Required courses for the **consumer services specialization** include Solutions to Consumer Problems, Legal Environment for Business, marketing, and Quantitative Methods in Consumer Affairs. Students will also select supporting courses that build knowledge in sales/retail, management and human resources, or that lead to a minor in Business, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Public Policy, or Survey Research.

Required courses for the **family financial services specialization** include Family Financial Management Theory and Practice, Family Financial Management II, Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits, Families in Business, Foundations of Finance, and macroeconomics. Students also choose one of four additional specialization areas from personal finance, banking, insurance, and financial planning.

For more information, check these web sites:

Consumer and Family Financial Services:
ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/cffs.cfm
College of Education and Human Ecology: ehe.osu.edu

Ohio State: osu.edu
Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu
Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.osu.edu

Curriculum Sample

This is a sample list of classes a student will take to pursue the consumer services specialization in Consumer and Family Financial Services. Since university students need more than specific education in a narrow field, they also will take classes to complete the General Education Curriculum (GEC). The GEC will allow students to develop the fundamental skills essential to collegiate success across major programs. Course work options satisfying the GEC often come from a variety of academic areas of study allowing students to tailor their GEC toward their interests. Note: This sample represents one of several possible paths to a degree in Consumer and Family Financial Services. Consult the departmental web site, ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/cffs.cfm, for details on each specific track.

Freshman Year:

Microeconomics	5
Psychology	5
Sociology	5
Statistics	5
GEC (English composition)	5
GEC (math and logical analysis)	9
GEC (natural sciences)	10
Education and Human Ecology Survey	1
Total hours	45

Sophomore Year:

The Multicultural Consumer	5
Consumer Problems	5
Family Financial Management	5
Consumer Perspective	2
Elective	4
GEC (history sequence)	10
GEC (natural sciences)	10
GEC (second writing course)	5
Total hours	46

Junior Year:

Solutions/Consumer Problems	5
Business Marketing	4
Communication	5
Consumer Service and Satisfaction	3
Specialization courses	12
GEC (arts and humanities)	10
Electives	6
Total hours	45

Senior Year:

Consumer Decision Making	5
Accounting	5
Business/Legal Environment	4
Professional Development	2
Quantitative Methods/Consumer Affairs	5
Specialization courses	12
Electives	2
GEC (third writing course)	5
Total hours	40

Co-Curricular Opportunities

Students in Consumer and Family Financial Services have the opportunity to become involved in many enriching experiences outside the classroom. Students can choose to complete an internship for course credit in banks, financial planning firms, insurance companies, and sales/marketing positions. An internship is required for students in family financial management pursuing the financial planner track.

The Financial Planning Association is a student organization that unites professionals from allied disciplines who are committed to helping individuals and families achieve their financial objectives. The organization also promotes ethical standards in the profession. The Financial Planning Association and hundreds of other student organizations are available to meet the many interests of students.

The Human Ecology Learning Community also provides an opportunity for students to interact with others who share their professional interests by living in a residence hall community with other students of the same major. Students in the learning community gain increased interaction with faculty members, upper-class students, and a stronger connection with the college.

Honors & Scholars Programs

The College of Education and Human Ecology offers an honors program for students of high academic ability. The honors program allows for individualized program structured to meet students' learning objectives and provides an opportunity for students to work with faculty to design and perform research. Through an understanding of the core course work and effective research methods, this individualized plan of study helps students experience professional growth and increased knowledge. In addition to undergraduate research opportunities and close working relationships with faculty, honors students also have access to smaller classes, priority scheduling, and unique housing opportunities.

The Scholars Programs feature close-knit, residential communities for students who share common interests. Consumer and Family Financial Services students may find the Business, Communication Technology, International Affairs, Mount Leadership Society, and Politics, Society, and Law Scholars Programs to be a good fit with their interests.

Career Prospects in Consumer and Family Financial Services

Consumer and Family Financial Services graduates are employed in a wide range of careers. Graduates find employment in business and industry, financial establishments, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, social service agencies, trade associations, public utilities, and the state legislature.

Positions in the area of consumer services include public relations representative, customer service representative, market research analyst, sales representative or manager, educational specialist, marketing specialist, and legislative advocate.

Family financial services graduates may find employment as financial planners or counselors; life insurance, credit, or benefits counselors; loan officers; or financial analysts.

Beginning salaries for graduates of the Consumer and Family Financial Services major range from \$25,000 to \$40,000, depending on candidates' skills, previous work experiences, and other factors determined by various employers.

Revised August 2009. For the most up-to-date information on the Consumer and Family Financial Services program, please visit ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/cffs.cfm.

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